



NEWSBREAK

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What's New?

CECR Café

The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) introduces the CECR Café, a discussion forum designed to provide interested Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees the opportunity to interact with each other and share ideas, tools, and resources. CECR Café discussions will allow TIF grantees the opportunity to discuss the successes and challenges of implementing various aspects of alternative compensation initiatives as well as learn more about the many research-based resources available on the CECR website.

The first CECR Café session will be held on October 2, 2008, at 1:00 p.m. ET and will focus on local TIF evaluations. As CECR plans for future sessions, we appreciate hearing from you on topics of interest and highest priority in your state or district. Please send your ideas or topics of interest to CECR@westat.com.

Although the CECR Café sessions are available only to TIF grantees, a summary of all CECR Café sessions will be available on the website for reference.

Hot Off the Press

Teacher Contract Costs Take Officials by Surprise With Unexpected Raises—*Morning Sentinel*, August 31, 2008

<http://morningsentinel.maintoday.com/news/local/5364258.html>

Teachers in Portland, Maine, received raises based on a union contract negotiated in 2006. The contract moved teacher pay from a credentials-based salary schedule to a professional learning-based schedule. Teachers earn higher salaries for taking college courses, attending workshops, or carrying out education-related projects in the school or community.

PUSD Revises Pay Plan, Reduces Schools' Goals—*Lake Powell Chronicle*, August 27, 2008
http://www.lakepowellchronicle.com/fe_view_article.php?story_id=1430&page_id=77&heading=0

Arizona's Page Unified School District revised its performance-based compensation program, which is funded under the state program Proposition 301. The revised program requires teachers to meet three out of four program goals to receive full compensation for the group portion of the incentive award.

DPS/DCTA Tentative Agreement Summary—Denver Public Schools, August 24, 2008
<http://communications.dpsk12.org/announcements/dps-dcta-tentative-agreement-summary>

After several weeks of negotiations, Denver Public Schools and the Denver Classroom Teachers Association reached an agreement about Denver's ProComp initiative. This agreement is valid for three years and includes the largest one-year salary increase for teachers in Colorado's history.

Teachers Bonuses Sliced by Almost 30% for 2009—*Winston-Salem Journal*, August 8, 2008
<http://www2.journalnow.com/content/2008/aug/08/teacher-bonuses-sliced-by-almost-30-for-2009/>

Because of a state cap on the available funds for North Carolina's performance-based incentive program, teachers' bonuses will be cut by 30 percent for the 2009 school year. The cap comes from necessary budget cuts as determined by the State Board of Education. During the 2007 school year, 72 percent of North Carolina's schools achieved the required student scores to receive an award.

Grantee Spotlight: Center for Educational Innovation–Public Education Association Partnership for Innovation in Compensation for Charter Schools

The Center for Educational Innovation–Public Education Association (CEI-PEA), in partnership with 10 New York City public charter schools, developed the Partnership for Innovation and Compensation for Charter Schools (PICCS) to retain, develop, and reward educators. PICCS provides financial incentives to teachers, instructional paraprofessional staff, and principals. Financial incentives are based on a multiple-measures evaluation process. The partnership developed a framework for incentives that individual PICCS schools customize to create an incentive plan that is appropriate to the specific needs and circumstances of the school.

The framework is comprised of four components:

- **Performance-based incentives for teachers and instructional staff based on improvements in student and classroom academic achievement.** These incentives are derived from criteria set annually by the teachers and principals based on student assessment information. Using comprehensive student data, teachers and principals establish student growth targets at the individual student level and classroom level.

Both sets of targets include criteria to determine how teachers and paraprofessionals qualify for financial incentives and are prepared in formal plans:

- Individual Achievement Plans (IAPs) for each student
- Classroom Instruction Plans (CIPs) for each classroom or cohort
- **Performance-based incentives for teachers and principals based on schoolwide improvements in academic achievement.** Principals in PICCS schools establish schoolwide achievement plans (SWAPs) that include achievement targets based on assessment data, school curricula, and professional development. SWAPs also clearly define incentive criteria for school leaders. The boards of trustees at each participating school approve the SWAPs.
- **Performance-based incentives for teachers and principals based on completion and presentation of effective, ready-for-replication learning experiences resulting from participation in a rigorous peer-review process.** The component fosters a collaborative environment for sharing best practices to raise overall school performance.
- **Additional incentives for teachers designed to encourage them to assume increased leadership responsibilities in instruction, evaluation, professional development, and peer review.** PICCS creates opportunities for teachers to take on leadership roles in their schools. Teachers can receive additional financial incentives for the following activities:
 - Membership on school-based teams that develop and facilitate the implementation of project initiatives at the school level.
 - Participation as a school-based peer-review coordinator.
 - Development of peer-reviewed and ready-for-replication learning experiences.
 - Participation as a school-based student data facilitator.
 - Additional leadership roles created during the project's planning and development phase.

What need is the project trying to address?

The PICCS schools, like many charter schools around the country, face high teacher turnover rates. On average, 33 percent of teachers in PICCS schools have zero to two years of experience. More than half of the teachers have fewer than six years of experience (64 percent, on average). More than 60 percent of the teachers in three of the 10 schools and 90 percent of the teachers in one school have two years of experience or less. Furthermore, the PICCS schools all serve high-needs students who are at risk because of poverty or learning disabilities. The median percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price lunch in partnership schools is 81 percent, ranging from 56 to 94 percent. Six out of the 10 schools are at or above 80 percent free or reduced-price lunch. Two of the schools serve high percentages of English language learners (21.2 percent and 42 percent), and seven of the schools have a special-education population of 10 percent or higher.

What are the goals of the project?

The overall goal of PICCS is to provide teachers and school leaders with meaningful financial incentives for achieving student outcome goals. PICCS uses this broader goal to develop a comprehensive school improvement model that brings together research-based strategies to improve teaching and learning, including the following:

- Data-driven planning and instruction that integrate robust data analysis with differentiated instruction, ongoing assessment, curriculum modification and resource allocation.
- Embedded professional development to help teachers and school leaders align curriculum and instruction with student needs.
- A comprehensive peer-review program through which educators can share best practices.
- Web 2.0 technologies that foster collaboration and communication among participating educators.

How much are the incentives?

Incentives for the PICCS program are established by each participating school within a partnership-wide framework, which includes the following requirements:

Teachers and instructional staff. Teachers are able to make up to \$5,000 if they or their schools meet or exceed achievement targets, and up to \$1,000 based on additional leadership. Instructional paraprofessionals can make up to \$2,000 based on meeting schoolwide targets. Incentives are also available for teachers in nontested subjects.

School leaders. Principals and instructional administrators are able to earn up to \$7,000 if they and/or their schools meet or exceed achievement targets. They also can make a maximum of \$1,000 for meeting leadership-related benchmarks.

What are the recent highlights of the project?

The first year of PICCS was dedicated to planning and development, during which time the partnership established the following:

- Leadership structure that includes teams at the project and school level dedicated to key project components: Project Advisory Team (PAT), Data Coordinator Advisory Team (DCAT), Peer Review Advisory Team (PRAT), and Financial Advisory Team.
- Incentive plan framework that each school customizes to create their incentive program.
- Incentive Plan Review Board to ensure the quality of each school's proposed incentive plan.
- PICCS Digital School Improvement Engine: a comprehensive set of online tools for schools to accomplish data warehousing, analysis, assessment, curriculum development, schoolwide planning, and collaboration.
- Critical Friends Group for the implementation of the peer review process.

- MyPICCS: a secure web portal that includes calendars, wikis, libraries, new rooms, resource management tools, and RSS feeds. It allows charter schools to post, access, and share data in a secure environment.

The PICCS program also created a comprehensive public website that includes detailed program information: www.piccs.org. The website includes information about the various resources used in program design and implementation, including the following:

- The Plan-Quest data-management system that the schools use to develop their comprehensive plans. The tool was developed by JPS Solutions and can be accessed at www.plan-quest.com.
- Podcasts that detail PICCS program information and research on performance-based compensation, charter schools, teacher retention, technology and education, value-added assessment, and more. The podcasts are available at www.piccs.org/podcasts.html.
- Peer-review materials created to evaluate suitable-for-replication learning experiences. This section provides the tools used in PICCS schools to develop peer-review materials, including a review protocol, a recording form, a PowerPoint overview of the peer-review framework, and examples from other peer-review processes. The forms are available at www.piccs.org/peerreview.html.
- PICCS also makes available publications and presentations on topics related to the program, including performance-based compensation, data-driven decision making, charter schools, and peer review as well as updates on the overall project. All resources can be downloaded from www.piccs.org/publications.html.

Please access the PICSS program profile on the CECR website's National Map at www.cecr.ed.gov/initiatives/maps/newYork.cfm.

Contact Us

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The Center for Educator Compensation Reform (CECR) was awarded to Westat—in partnership with Learning Point Associates, Synergy Enterprises Inc., Vanderbilt University, and the University of Wisconsin—by the U.S. Department of Education in October 2006.

The primary purpose of CECR is to support the Teacher Incentive Fund (TIF) grantees with their implementation efforts through the provision of ongoing technical assistance and the development and dissemination of timely resources. CECR also is charged with raising national awareness of alternative and effective strategies for educator compensation through this newsletter, a Web-based clearinghouse, and other outreach activities. We look forward to an exciting partnership with the TIF grantees as we embark together on blazing a new path for education reform.

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